What Moratorium?

In an editorial Aug. 9, you expressed support for the idea of the temporary moratorium on underground blasts in which the verification procedure would consist solely of agreement by each participating nation to permit outside inspection if it could not otherwise satisfy a challenge that a given explosion of seismic disturbance was non-nuclear. While expressing encouragement for the adoption by the nuclear nations of this unpoliced moratorium, you proceeded to state that "Soviet violation of the last such moratorium in 1961 soured the American taste for another."

Was there really any such moratorium? A statement by Dr. Hans Bethe and several other scientists on U.S. test ban proposals, appearing in *The Washington Post* on April 9, 1963, noted:

"It is too often forgotten that there was no test-ban agreement (much less a

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treaty) in 1961; and that President Eisenhower on Dec. 29, 1959, terminated the one-year informal moratorium by announcing, "The voluntary moratorium on testing will expire on Dec. 31."

Obviously, moratorium or no, it is highly regrettable that the USSR began testing again. But, to say Russia broke a moratorium when actually it had not, is to "muddy" the situation when clarity is badly needed.

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